

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS WHO COMMIT, THREATEN TO COMMIT, OR SUPPORT TERRORISM—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 113-155)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, is to continue in effect beyond September 23, 2014.

The crisis constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York and Pennsylvania and against the Pentagon, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on United States nationals or the United States that led to the declaration of a national emergency on September 23, 2001, has not been resolved. These actions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13224 with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, September 17, 2014.

CONSTITUTION DAY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Constitution Day, which is celebrated today, September 17. On this day, we commemorate the day our Framers, 39 delegates from 12 States, signed our Nation's charter at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1787.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution is more than just a document; it is the enduring structure of our Nation's government. It is a distinctive system of

checks and balances, separation of powers, and protection of freedoms that has defined and guided our Nation since its founding.

Today we reiterate the values of freedom, justice, and opportunity that have provided America with generations of prosperity. Today we honor the Framers of our Constitution and the principles they put forth more than 227 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the future of our Nation is strong if we continue to hold these principles dear.

Happy Constitution Day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, September 15, 2014, I was unavoidably detained attending representational activities and thus unable to return in time for rollcall vote No. 497.

I would like the record to reflect that, had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote No. 497, H.R. 5108, to establish the Law School Clinic Certification Program of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes.

RETIREMENT OF JUDGE MICHAEL NASH

(Mr. CÁRDENAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the retirement of an incredible man and a dear friend, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Michael Nash.

As presiding judge of the juvenile court for more than 16 years, a total of 29 years on the bench, his retirement is a huge loss for the community and for the Los Angeles judicial system.

During his tenure, he brought numerous changes to the juvenile court: the creation of a drug court in both delinquency and dependency courts, the development of protocols to foster communication and coordination between the courts, and simple changes such as lowering the judge's bench so that children in his court could better participate in the proceedings.

While I know Judge Nash will always continue to be a champion for children and families, I want to thank him for his distinguished career and congratulate him on his well-earned retirement.

CONSTITUTION DAY

(Mr. YOHO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, today we commemorate the 227th birthday of the Constitutional Convention and the creation of America's most cherished document—our Constitution. Today is Constitution Day.

On September 17, 1787, our Founding Fathers, 39 brave Americans, created a

document that to this day is the foundation of our country and is admired by people around the world.

The British statesman William Gladstone said of our Constitution:

The American Constitution is, so far as I can see, the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man.

I wholeheartedly agree with this statement. The Framers established a new form of government that for the first time respected the rights of the individual. No longer would a king or dictator rule over their citizens. The power of the government would derive from the consent of the governed.

Responsibility of good governance is not just placed on the political leaders but on the participation of those citizens who have voted for them. Benjamin Franklin, when asked outside of Independence Hall by a curious woman as to what sort of government was created:

A republic, ma'am, if you dare keep it.

PREVENTING THE EPIDEMIC OF SUICIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time for our Nation to raise awareness about the persistent scourge of suicide.

Tens of thousands of Americans die each year purposefully by their own actions. They are our neighbors and our friends, our sons and our daughters, and too often they are the men and women who have served our country honorably in the United States military. An estimated 22 veterans commit suicide every day in our country. That is one life lost every 65 minutes.

One year ago, we came together in this Chamber during a special bipartisan order to send a clear message that this epidemic of veteran suicide must end. Now, 1 year later, the fight isn't over and more work needs to be done.

Tonight we demonstrate our ongoing support for the individuals, organizations, and agencies devoted to preventing the epidemic of veteran suicide, and we challenge the VA, the Department of Defense, and our fellow lawmakers to do more. We are failing in our obligation to do right by those who have served so honorably.

Finally, we send a message to military families who have experienced this tragedy: Your family's loss is not forgotten. We will work to stop this epidemic. We work for the memory of your loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend and colleague from Florida, Representative YOHO.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a quick moment again to thank my colleague, Representative SINEMA, for the invitation to speak today on the very important issue of veteran suicide prevention. She has been a true champion of improving access to quality care for our Nation's veterans and has been a leader in Congress pushing for the real reforms to combat veteran suicide.

By shining a light on veteran suicide rates of approximately 22 per day, we as a nation can start to understand the urgency with which we need to solve and prevent this epidemic that our veterans, their families, and their friends struggle with daily. Not coping with the stress and anxiety early enough all too often leads to the veterans taking their own life.

I want to be clear: this is not an issue that affects veterans alone; it affects all of us.

Our government asked these soldiers to place themselves in harm's way, and if when a veteran returns home they are struggling to cope, we as a nation must come together to ensure a strong support system is in place. This means we must remove the stigma associated with seeking help. This means we must hire more mental health professionals and more who have served in combat zones themselves. This means the VA must provide after-hours services. The VA must review its group therapy model. There must be a review of discharges that resulted from mental health conditions, and the Department of Defense and VA must better coordinate the transition from DOD care to VA care.

□ 1745

I have spoken with veterans throughout my district and a common theme that emerges is that they have lost faith in the VA. They feel abandoned by the very system, the very country which they fought for to preserve and to protect the liberties and freedoms we have the privileges of experiencing daily.

I had a young man send me a letter directly to my house, and I want to share some of it. He said he had been seeking care. He had served in the gulf war. He was in his mid-forties, and he had been seeking care over the course of the last 10 years. Time and time again his appointments had either been canceled or rescheduled, and he had gotten to a point where he tried to get care and over the last 13 appointments they were canceled or rescheduled. He ended the letter pleading for help, and he said that if I do not get the help and care that I need, because I have no-

where else to turn, that I am afraid I am either going to hurt somebody or myself.

We reached out to this young man, we had him come into our office, and I could see a troubled individual that had given up on life and had no hope for the future. We intervened for this young man, we called the VA system, and they got him in that night. Since then, I am happy to report that the man has called us and said it was a life-changing experience for him and he could only imagine what would have happened had he not gotten interdiction.

Congress and the VA are working to solve these deficiencies so that our soldiers have the care they need. But it should not take an act of Congress, or a Congressman or -women, to intercede on behalf of a veteran to get the care they earned, need, and deserve. I know myself and my colleagues will do what is needed to fix the shortcomings of the DOD and the VA system.

America and Americans cannot sit idly by and bear witness to the path of devastation and destruction left in the wake of a veteran suicide for their family and friends to deal with.

I thank my colleague for bringing this very important subject to light. We all need to work in a bipartisan fashion to solve this. I thank my colleague.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you, Representative YOHO, for your leadership and, in particular, thank you for sharing the story of a veteran that your office helped.

We hear countless stories from Members of Congress in this very body of veterans who reach out to our offices, sometime as a last resort as they are facing or contemplating suicide. I am proud to say that many Members of this body have done what it has taken to help those individuals recover and stay in touch.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn the time over to my colleague from Arizona, Mr. RON BARBER, for his remarks.

Mr. BARBER. Thank you, Congresswoman, and thank you for bringing us together this evening on this important topic.

I represent 85,000 veterans in my district, one of the largest communities of veterans in the country. My father was a veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He would be appalled if he were alive today to see what has been happening at the Veterans Affairs Department in our State and in other parts of the country. I am really proud that this Congress has taken action to address those concerns to give the Secretary the authority he needs to address those concerns.

Mr. Speaker, nearly a decade and a half of brutal conflict overseas has taken its toll on our men and women who serve in the Armed Forces. I was in Afghanistan about 3 months ago, and I saw the conditions under which our military operates. The stress is im-

mense. Everywhere you go there is a threat. Extended deployments and multiple deployments have taken their toll on people we have sent to protect our country and to fight the battles we asked them to fight.

It is estimated that perhaps as many as 500,000 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan will return home, when all is said and done, with serious wounds, the wounds that are signature wounds of these conflicts: posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

Military service creates a culture that demands that our soldiers are tough, and the culture can also prevent many of our servicemembers from seeking the help they need. As a result, they are left to face the ghosts of war alone.

The suicide rate among our country's brave servicemen and -women and veterans is at a frightening level. Some estimates have shown that as many as 22 veterans take their own lives every day.

We must combat military and veteran suicide with the same conviction that we take on the enemy of war because it is killing our men and women in and out of uniform. We must wage a well-funded, well-planned campaign to fight this heartbreaking epidemic.

I have been pushing for better access to health care for our veterans since I came to Congress almost 2½ years ago.

One of the first bills I introduced was the Veterans Health Access Act to ensure that veterans could get the mental health care that they needed in communities without having to endure long commutes and even longer wait times at VA facilities.

Government dysfunction cannot be the enemy of our servicemen and veterans. We must do more to cut the red tape that has kept our veterans from top quality mental health care. I am pleased that the VA bill that we passed allows the VA to contract out for services close to where the veteran lives. This is essential, particularly for treatment of mental health issues.

Mr. Speaker, we must do more for those who have borne the brunt of war. We must come together—Congress, the administration, the health care community, mental health experts—to build upon a plan that will help our veterans who have served this Nation so courageously and yet may still be suffering.

Again, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Arizona for bringing this to the House floor this evening. I stand ready to work with her and all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do what we can for our veterans, not only in Arizona, but nationwide.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you, Mr. BARBER, for your commitment to supporting veterans in Arizona.

Last year, I shared with you the story of a young veteran in my district, Sergeant Daniel Somers. Sergeant Somers was an Army veteran of two tours in Iraq. Diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury and PTSD, Sergeant Somers ultimately took his own

life after struggling with the VA bureaucracy and not getting the help he needed in time.

Together with the Somers family, we have worked to prevent veteran suicide and improve much-needed access to mental health care for our veterans.

We have recently developed the Classified Veterans Access to Care Act to ensure that all veterans, including those with classified experiences, get immediate access to mental health services in the appropriate care setting.

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee included this legislation in a larger veterans package, and we expect it to be on the floor before the end of the year.

While this is an important step in supporting our veterans, we have much more work to do.

I would like to take a moment to yield the floor to the gentleman from California, Representative LAMALFA, my friend and colleague.

Mr. LAMALFA. Thank you. I appreciate my colleague from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) for your efforts on this.

When you become a Member of the House of Representatives and you start receiving those calls from veterans in your district on the difficulty they have with what they thought they were promised by their government when they enlisted, when they went into the military, it really, really hits home. It really affects your heart to see these veterans who have struggled to at least be heard for their claims, for their health care, by the VA, by the treatment centers.

We have to do better than that. To see the suicide rate among veterans the way it is, to know that they felt like the government has turned their backs on them, is appalling. We have to give them the hope.

My office, I know my colleagues that have spoken here tonight, have turned towards helping as much as they can. So my message, just a brief message, for our veterans out there: Do not give up. Know that we are trying to reform the VA system, trying to reform through the measures that have been brought up the way the VA treats and gets the help for veterans who have served us.

They made a promise to us. We need to keep the promise to them. For them to go feeling hopeless and that nobody cares about them, that they can't get treatment, is one of the biggest shames we could have as a country. We have asked them to do a lot. We will continue to do so in the future. We need to be prepared to take care of them properly, if they need it, when they come home.

I appreciate, again, you having this time here tonight, Ms. SINEMA, here in the House to put a spotlight on this as you have. What I have tried to do in my office and the hard work by my own staff is to have our veterans be treated respectfully but also feel hopeful that someone hears their message,

hears their plea, and then will address their needs timely and respectfully. They should not be homeless, they should not feel to the point of hopelessness that suicide is an alternative for them.

Thank you, Ms. SINEMA.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you, Representative LAMALFA, for your commitment to veterans. Your comment and your message to veterans of don't give up is one that I think we must all repeat every day, not just in words, but in our actions as Members of Congress to continue to reform the VA system and send a clear message to veterans that we won't give up either in reforming the system and taking care of them.

Earlier this evening, I shared the story of Sergeant Daniel Somers. The VA failed Sergeant Somers. We have since learned that the VA has failed thousands of other veterans through gross mismanagement and delays in access to care.

Veterans at the Phoenix VA and VA facilities across the country were placed on secret lists and had to wait months before seeing a doctor.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General's final report on the Phoenix VA Health Care System, which was released last month, confirms that the Phoenix VA, housed in my district, left 3,500 veterans at risk of never receiving care. Additionally, 1,400 veterans on the official electronic waiting list were left waiting for unacceptably long periods of care. At least 20 veterans who failed to receive timely or appropriate care passed away.

Mr. Speaker, this is immoral, un-American, and it puts our veterans at risk. But in Arizona, we are not idly waiting for Washington to take action, we are taking action ourselves.

In Phoenix, we have established a working group of community providers, veterans service organizations, and the local VA to work together to improve access to services. We also recently cohosted our first Veterans First Clinic, which brought together community providers, the Phoenix VA, and over 20 veteran-serving organizations to help veterans in a variety of ways. Approximately 400 veterans and their families attended and got the care that they earned and that they deserve.

These are examples of the good that results when we set aside partisanship and focus instead on putting veterans first to help meet their needs.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share a story from my district. Last month, a local veteran, Peter, came to our district office. He came to ask for help with his claims and for help navigating the VA.

After meeting with my social work staff for 2 hours, Peter told one of my caseworkers that he had thoughts of suicide and he had the ability to carry out those thoughts. In fact, he said, the only thing keeping him from doing so was his daughters.

Our office met with Peter for an additional 2 hours, listening to him share

his feelings and focusing on solutions and next steps. We shared with him our veterans resource guide, which let him know about available community programs and organizations dedicated to supporting veterans with services that range from mental health treatment to financial assistance.

Peter told us he had no idea there were so many organizations that support local veterans, and he left our office that day feeling better than when he had arrived.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke with him personally just a few days later. He told me he had never heard of an office that would respond and care about his suicidal ideation, his depression, and his needs. I am grateful that Peter came to our office. I am even more grateful that we were able to help him.

Since meeting with Peter and other veterans in our district, we have released a veterans resource guide for the Ninth Congressional District in Arizona, a comprehensive 27-page document that provides local veterans with detailed information about community resources that are available to them. We hope that this resource guide will be replicated in districts across the country.

□ 1800

Mr. Speaker, the issue of veteran suicide and the systemic problems in the VA system require a substantial local and national effort. My colleagues here today believe, as I believe, that no one who comes home after serving our country should ever feel like he or she has nowhere to turn.

In response to the VA crisis, Congress recently passed and the President signed into law the Veterans Access to Care Through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act. This legislation makes needed reforms to the VA health care system and will ensure that Arizona veterans get access to the care that they have earned.

The Veterans Access to Care Through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act builds on our work to address the crisis in Phoenix by allowing veterans who have been waiting for medical care for more than 30 days to receive care from non-VA doctors.

It authorizes the VA to fire senior managers who knew about these cover-ups across the country. It reviews scheduling systems and technology so that fewer veterans slip through the cracks when seeking care.

It provides resources for more physicians and medical staff to work in VA hospitals around the country; also, it creates an independent commission to investigate the Veterans Administration to find out what went wrong and evaluate access to care throughout the VA health care system.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation was an important step forward, but more action is required. The first step is speedy and effective implementation of this important bill. I urge the VA and agencies locally who are working with

the VA to speed the implementation of this important legislation and show a change of culture at the VA. We all believe that veterans deserve the best possible care.

Carl McLaughlin, a 38-year-old Army veteran, committed suicide on December 19, 2013. He had been stationed in Bosnia, and he was released from the Army on a medical discharge in 2004.

Starting in 2006, Carl was treated at the Phoenix VA, but, as time went on, it became increasingly difficult for Carl to see his doctor. According to Carl's mother, Terry, at the time of his death, Carl was waiting to hear back from the Phoenix VA to have his medications adjusted and to see his doctor.

Carl suffered from recurring pain caused by shoulder injury, severe hearing loss, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder. His depression worsened over time.

Terry, Carl's mom, told us:

The last time I saw Carl was a few days before his death. He looked really depressed, and I asked him if he had a doctor's appointment scheduled because I know he had been waiting over 4 weeks for a call back from the doctor's office. He said, no, he was still waiting.

He called them the next day, six times, and left three messages. He was put on hold and hung up on the other three times. This problem of calling and being hung up on and not getting calls back had been going on for over 1 to 2 years.

Terry asked us to share her son's story in the hope that his tragedy doesn't happen to another family.

Recently, I cosponsored legislation called the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. This bill reviews mental health staffing requirements and increases the ability of the VA to recruit and train psychiatrists. Congress should pass this legislation this year to make it easy for veterans like Carl to see a behavioral health specialist.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I want to thank my colleagues who joined me this evening. Our thoughts are with the families who have lost a loved one. Each of us can do something to raise awareness, to be that light for a struggling veteran in our community.

Businesses can display signs to let veterans know that help is always available to them. Mental health professionals can volunteer with organizations like Give an Hour to provide free counseling to veterans, their family members, and active duty members and their families.

We can all learn to recognize the signs of crisis by visiting veteranscrisisline.net and then reaching out to the veterans in our lives.

Here in Congress, we can do more. We need a VA that provides real and meaningful help to veterans in need and that puts veterans first and works aggressively with community providers to improve the quality and accessibility of care. We need a VA that is transparent and open to restore the trust and credibility it has lost.

We who enjoy our freedom every day, thanks to the sacrifices of our military

servicemembers, must all step up to end the epidemic of veteran suicide.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LET'S END VETERAN SUICIDE

(Mr. GALLEGO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, few things we do here are more important than taking care of the men and women who have fought to protect our Nation. Doing something about the issue of suicide is incredibly important.

Not so very long ago, I had the opportunity to talk to a person that I had known for a very long time who I had met while serving in the legislature and who told me that his son, who was a veteran, had come back and was doing fine; yet, one day, he got the phone call that his son had committed suicide. No family should go through that.

Here in the Congress, we have an opportunity to do something about that. It is my hope that Congress, working in a bipartisan fashion, can work together to do something about this problem and to take better care across the board of the men and women who have fought every day, day in and day out, to serve our country.

ISLAMIC JIHAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I expect that, shortly, a colleague will be here that I will hand off to for a few minutes to deal with several housekeeping issues, but, for the moment that I have, I want to focus on an issue that has gained the attention—as well it should—of the American people.

The number one duty of government, Mr. Speaker, is to secure the safety and the security of the American people. That is why we have a government. That is why we exist. It is the reason why countries enjoy sovereignty and declare themselves sovereign nations.

That means they are a separate political unit, and they exist for the purpose of preserving the safety and security of their people. That is our duty, and that is our government.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, throughout each generation that somehow, some way, there is a force that comes against a nation. In different eras, we have had different foes that the United States has had to contend with, beginning at our founding, when the United States of America, through our Declaration of Independence and through our Constitution, on this, our Constitution Day—and, by the way, we say happy Constitution Day to all Americans. We are very proud of our United States Constitution.

Contained within the Constitution is the admonition to the President, to the Congress, to the Supreme Court, again, to ensure that, in our founding document, we understand that it is the duty of the government to secure the safety and the security of the American people.

What led up to the writing of the Declaration of Independence and to the American Revolution and, ultimately, to America's founding document with the United States Constitution was a reaction of the colonists against a great totalitarian oppression that was coming against the United States. That was from the British motherland of which the United States was a colony of.

We pushed back against that oppression for many and sundry reasons, some of which were taxation, others were the taking away the rights of American citizens, whether it was forcing American citizens to take soldiers into their homes or taking away their rights as free men under the Magna Carta.

The American people rose up, and they said, "We want to have freedom." They threw off the chains of the totalitarianism of the day, the British Empire.

Going further into the future with the War of 1812, again, the United States was pushed into a conflict with the British, and, again, we had to throw off that enemy. Again, we saw our own house come apart in the time of the Civil War. There was also the Spanish-American War.

The United States was engaged in a great totalitarianism in 1917 with World War I and, again, in World War II. There was a conflict in the totalitarianism of our day. It was an evil known as Communism, both from the Soviet threat and also from Nazism.

The United States came together as a Nation. We threw off the yoke of the oppressor, of the totalitarianism of our day—in other words, a regime that had an idea that it wanted to conquer the world with its evil and immoral philosophy, whether it was Communism or whether it was Nazism.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, that every generation is confronted by a great evil, and the moral questions of the day are related to that evil. The evil, Mr. Speaker, that we are dealing with today is something known as Islamic jihad.

Its face is ugly. Its face has reared not only just in recent decades and just the last few months of this summer, but Islamic jihad is something that has been around as long as the inception of Islam itself.

The regime of jihad has been defeated, summarily, time and time again throughout history, but it was defeated through military might, it wasn't defeated through diplomacy, and defeated it was.

It was defeated at Tours; it was defeated at the battle of the gates of Vienna; it was defeated again with the